

"Do you know, I always thought unicorns were fabulous monsters too? I never saw one alive before!" "Well, now that we have seen each other," said the Unicorn, "if you believe in me, I'll believe in you."

---Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

A Zoography of Magical Creatures

Conventional references (dictionaries, encyclopedias, et al.) offer vague or ambiguous descriptions of most magical creatures - using terms such as elf, sprite and goblin interchangeably, even though there is a considerable difference between a woodland elf and a sewer-dwelling goblin.

While an exhaustive index of all the world's magical creatures is beyond the scope of this work, the following should give you with a basic understanding of some of the major races and species.

I. Demi-Humans (dwarves, gnomes, ogres, etc.)

The Demi-Human races are generally human-shaped, but not generally human-sized. Demi-Humans who are nearly human size sometimes try to "pass" as humans, but they usually require a good disguise or a clever alibi, or both. ("Rare pituitary disorders" are a popular excuse for being eccentrically-proportioned.)

Dragons are often forced to intervene in disputes between the various races, or to help Demi-Humans fit into human society.

Dwarves

***Dwarf** - n. Any of a mythical race of diminutive beings, typically skilled in mining and metalworking and often possessing magical powers, figuring esp. in Scandinavian folklore. [\[1\]](#)*

Dwarves are a rugged, subterranean race known for their work-ethic. They are strong for their size and make excellent miners and construction workers - though they have a fear of heights [\[2\]](#) which prevents them from working on buildings over one story tall.

In the city, they make excellent tunnel workers in the subway system (Those orange trains that don't stop at any stations? Dwarves.) Some of them may work in the sewers as well, but they're not so keen on filth. Dwarves are always Union.

They may have above-ground jobs as well, but usually at night if possible. Dwarven eyes are very sensitive to light, so they will always be seen wearing sunglasses during the day. They enjoy working in factories and sweatshops. Anything with lots of work and not much light. Because they are generally hard-working and industrious and look exactly like short humans, it has been fairly easy for dwarves to fit into human society.

Dwarves do not have pointed ears. Though they are usually bearded, including the women.

Dwarves with a creative bent may work in animation - as models. Disney's "Seven Dwarves" are six actual guys who spent years posing for all those shots. (Sleepy and Bashful were played by the same guy.)

A few dwarves have been known to work at amusement parks (sometimes playing dwarves!) but this is rare because most dwarves are uncomfortable around children (too playful).

Many New York dwarves make their home in a secret underground village just past Far Rockaway. (You take the "A" train to the end of the line and then go one more stop.)

Dwarves are not unfriendly, but they find it hard to be tolerant of those less-productive than themselves.

Other jobs for dwarves: Blacksmith. Ditch digger. Body builder. Pro Wrestler.[\[3\]](#)

Gnomes

***Gnome** - n. A member of a legendary subterranean race of diminutive beings, typically represented as bearded old men and supposedly guardians of the earth's treasure; a goblin, a dwarf*

Gnomes are similar to Dwarves in many respects. Gnomes, however, have pointed ears, and are a lot more outdoorsy. Gnomes love gardening and have been known to tend not only their own gardens, but those of their neighbors as well. If there are gnomes anywhere in your neighborhood, they will look after your plants while you are out of town whether you ask them or not. (If you forget to water your garden, and it doesn't die, you've probably got gnomes.)

Unfortunately, Gnomes have terrible allergies to non-organic substances, which has been devastating for the gnome population of late. You see, if they wander onto a chemically-treated lawn, they will react to the chemicals in the lawn, let out a giant sneeze and freeze that way forever. These "lawn gnomes" can be revived, however, if you remove them from the affected lawn and give them antihistamines.

Because of their allergies to pollutants, it is rare to see gnomes out of doors in the city. Most gnomes in the U.S. live in rural settings, where they run organic farms or free-range chicken ranches. In fact, over 75% of all organic produce in this country comes from gnome farms.

A city the size of New York does have its share of gnomes, however. They are hard-working folk (but more laid back than the workaholic dwarves) and many of them own their own businesses. Green grocers, woodworkers, leather craft, toy makers - these

are typical gnome occupations. In fact, Santa's "elves" are probably actually gnomes, which is a big sore spot for them. Gnomes rarely get credit for the work they do. Everyone mistakes them for elves or dwarves. (Unless they're frozen on a lawn looking like an idiot, THEN everybody points and laughs and says "Look at the funny gnome.")

Because of their small size, gnomes can save money by renting tiny apartments in strange tucked away places no one else would want to live. The old shed in the back of a narrow alley, or the dilapidated dog house in front of a building that doesn't allow pets - may be gnome homes.

Gnomes always wear a tall hat, because that's where they keep their stuff. You'd be surprised what you can fit into a gnome hat.

Ogres

Ogre - n. A man-eating monster; usually represented as a hideous giant. Also, a cruel, irascible, or ugly person.

Ogres are a largish race with a reputation for being grumpy. Ogres find it fairly easy to pass for humans as they are hulking, but not outrageously tall (like Giants [q.v.]) If it weren't for their pointed ears and their snaggly teeth, they would look exactly like bouncers, or linebackers, which some of them are.

Looking like humans and fitting in with them are two different things, however. Ogres are generally treated very badly by most people, who seem to forget that great, hulking behemoths have feelings, too. They also have a reputation for un-intelligence which is completely undeserved. Some of the Microsoft's brightest computer programmers are ogres.

Ogre women are exactly half as tall as the male, but just as big around. They also suffer from male pattern baldness.

Because of all this, Ogres as a rule have very low self-esteem and are extremely shy. They would like to be liked, however, so most of them do not move to compounds in Idaho away from human companionship. In fact, you'll often see them at clubs or concerts, hanging out on the fringes, hoping someone will ask them to dance.

Ogres make good bouncers, hitmen, NFL players, movers, longshoremen.

They may also seek work that puts them in the midst of human society, yet allows them to be reclusive at the same time, such as: computer programmers, night watchmen, long distance truckers, comedy writers, city bus drivers, (Not *school* bus drivers. Children are cruel.) prep cooks, stage managers.

Because of their unusual dental needs, there is an entire secret medical subculture of dentists who treat only Ogres. It requires a very specially-trained orthodontist to know the difference between a severe overbite and a properly snagged set of teeth. These doctors also do ears, because that saves a trip.

(Speaking of which, Ogres have very sharp earsight and almost always hear what you say about them behind their backs.)

Ogres are big, BIG sci-fi fans. They love to go to conventions and dress as Klingons and have people tell them how great they look.

Because they spend most of their lives being ostracized, even the most assimilated Ogres tend to be alarmingly inexperienced about social customs. You will rarely meet an Ogre who knows how to two-step, where to take a girl on a second date, which fork to use, or how much to tip the valet.

Trolls

***Troll** - n. In Scandinavian mythology, a member of a race of grotesque dwarfs (or, formerly, giants) usu. Dwelling in caves or under bridges.*

Trolls are an unbearably ugly race of beings with a reputation for nastiness. But you'd be disagreeable, too, if humans tried to steal every bridge you ever built.

Actually, what happens is this: Any time new construction begins on a bridge of any sort, a bunch of trolls will show up on the second day and just start working on the lower half. Human contractors don't know what to do about this because they obviously aren't on the payroll, but they're not sure if they should ask them to leave, because they seem to be really good at what they do.

After construction is finished, the human contractors go on to their next project, not realizing that the Trolls believe they have an unspoken agreement that they own the underside of any bridge they help build.

No one knows where the custom of trolls-living-under-bridges comes from, but you will find them everywhere - from the smallest freeway overpass with room for a single troll to nest in the I-beams, to massive structures like the Golden Gate or the Brooklyn Bridges which house entire Troll cities tunneled under the foundations on either side. (On very wide spans the villages on either side may develop into separate, even warring, communities. Not a pleasant situation.)

The infamous "troll dolls" look nothing at all like a real Troll. Well, maybe if you shaved a Troll's entire body and slapped a dopey grin on its face there'd be a vague resemblance. Real trolls are anatomically incorrect, however. (They have no official genders^[4] and reproduce by an unpleasant process called "sprouting")

Trolls also have wildly colorful hair, but this is not a natural phenomenon. You see, Trolls are covered in thick, yet patchy, extremely unattractive tufts of hair all over their body. They know it looks awful, they can't help it. Back in the 60s, though, someone^[5] introduced them to hair dye and Troll-kind went a little crazy with it. Nowadays almost any Troll you meet will have multi-colored hair in strange patterns all over their body.

They also discovered curling and moussing - and feathering was big for awhile, back in the 80s - and today Trolls spend more on hair products than they do on food.

Trolls have a lot of weird customs (like living under bridges) mostly because they hate to admit when they're wrong and so there is always a danger of Trolls trying out some new fad and then refusing to quit because someone told them it was stupid.

Fortunately, Trolls don't go out into human society much - There's almost always a problem - but a few of them work as toll booth operators - an unbelievable scam that seems to be working because humans never think to ask where all the money is going.

Giants

Giant - n. A mythical, pseudo-historical, or fictional being in human form but of superhuman size

Giants are an extremely tall, human-looking people, who are usually very reclusive because human beings have not historically been kind to 14 foot creatures of any kind.

They dwell in remote cabins in the mountains, or paramilitary complexes in Montana and Idaho and generally keep to themselves.

Reports of Sasquatch or "Bigfoot" sightings are undoubtedly hill giants who wandered too close to town.

Very short giants have been known to pass themselves off as very tall humans, and several of them play in the NBA.^[6] A lot of these "borderline" giants have moved into the city in recent generations because giantkind has been almost as intolerant of shorties as human beings are of them.

Many Giants suffer from chronic mood swings (a chemical imbalance related to their extreme size) - an increasingly common syndrome (aggravated by environmental pollutants) which is easily treated with herbal teas and vitamin supplements. But a Giant who is off his or her meds can become very dangerous.

Leprechauns

Leprechaun - n. In Irish folklore, a small, usu. mischievous being of human form, often associated with shoemaking or buried treasure.

Everybody knows what a Leprechaun is. What they don't know is that most of what they know is completely distorted or inaccurate. Leprechauns are Irish, it's true. But they don't wear that outfit. Not all the time. It's just for special occasions. Like Saint Patrick's Day, or the annual Notre Dame homecoming game. For day-to-day wear, Leprechaun's favor ordinary business casual. Although they do like to flash a bit of the green. A shamrock in the lapel, perhaps. Or Kelly green socks. But other than that, you couldn't tell them from an ordinary shortish Irish business man. Which most of them are. There's hardly a pub in midtown that isn't secretly owned (or silent partnered) by a genuine Leprechaun.

Catching a Leprechaun will not win you a pot of gold. This is a myth, spawned from a horrible custom in the 1600s of gangs of men breaking into Leprechaun households and stealing all their valuables. Leprechauns are good with money, though. But you won't find it in a pot at the end of a rainbow. It's all in bonds. Or the stock market. Or invested in the family business.

Leprechauns like to dabble in magic spells the way some people dabble in baseball stats. You'll often see a couple of old Leprechauns sitting around casting spells at each other in a pub. But they're not especially mischievous. (Unless you make one mad. Then you're in trouble.) And they don't grant wishes. But if a Leprechaun gives you advice, you ought to take it. (Remember: they really are good with money). That's why people who are nice to Leprechauns tend to prosper. So maybe they are lucky.

NOTE: Leprechaun children grow like human children until they reach adolescence, then they start to grow smaller again.

Gremlins

Gremlin - n. Originally, a menial, a dogsbody. Now, a mischievous sprite alleged to cause mechanical or other faults, esp. in aircraft.

Gremlins are a race of smallish (child-size), barely human-looking creatures who love dismantling mechanical objects to see how they work. Unfortunately, Gremlins are not so good at re-mantling them afterwards.

Most Gremlins work in auto shops, usually in a back room that the owner has provided for their use. (Surprisingly, a lot of garages employ Gremlins because "they may not be good, but they're fast".)

The really lucky Gremlins get to work for airlines, or at NASA. They really love to get their hands on big, big machines. Several Gremlins are vying for a seat on the next

trip to the International Space Station. They'd love to get up there and see how that baby is put together.

If a machine doesn't work after a Gremlin has "fixed" it, they will always try to blame someone else (partly because they are convinced they did it right this time.)

At work, Gremlins wear overalls which they are very proud of (It has my name!)

Elves

***Elf** - n. A supernatural, usu. small being of Germanic mythology with magical powers for good or evil; a fairy (sometimes distinguished from a fairy as being male, or, formerly, inferior or more malignant); a mischievous or spiteful creature; a dwarf*

Elves are a diverse race (not unlike your humans) found in every climate in all colors, shapes and sizes. Though elves are always diminutive in some way, they may be anything from thin (but tall) to short (but plump).

Elves are known for their pointy ears and for being very attuned to their environments. Sea elves breathe water, may have blue or blue-green hair and the ability to talk to fishes. Wood elves dress in earth tones or verdant hues, communicate empathically with forest creatures and have skin that changes color in the autumn.

This is due in part to the extremely rapid genetic acclimatization rate of elves (which is even faster than humans). If you moved sea elves to the forest, within two generations their offspring would be indistinguishable from the native wood elves.

Elves were once believed to be very reclusive, but the truth is that they are just so good at fitting in with their environments that unless you see their ears, most people don't even notice that there are elves among them.

There are several interesting and unique elven races found only in urban areas such as New York.

Street Elves - sooty, dusty, or pavement-colored skin, eyes and hair (also brownstone in certain neighborhoods); prone to shouting or profanity even when not angry; talk to pigeons; also eat pigeons.

Office Elves - very pale; hang out by the copy machine; also ride elevators more than one would think is necessary; dwell in cubicles which are always very tidy; love small talk; seem awfully depressed for elves though.

Deli Elves - often plump; love to eat; always know the owners by name; "can't start their day" without their coffee.

Park Elves - very similar to forest elves, except that they wear jogging outfits and walkmans; speak with squirrels (often seen feeding them)

Subway Elves - only elves in the world known to litter; always have tokens (standard currency in their culture); can talk to rats.

New York City may also have elves which are peculiar to specific parts of town. Elves in Chinatown, for example, probably dress differently and have different customs than elves in Harlem.

Interestingly, most elves are very self-sufficient, so they don't actually NEED jobs, even if they have them. They just do it because everybody else is doing it and they want to fit in. (Kind of like *Zelig*).

NOTE: Several well-known movie stars are elves. Usually the ones who are impossibly thin and needlessly eccentric.

Of all the demi-human races, Elves are the most closely related to the Fairies.

II. Fairy Folk

Fairy Folk differ from Demi-Humans in three respects:

- Fairies tend to be flagrantly magical. (You are unlikely to meet a dwarf with butterfly wings, a glowing aura or a fiery tail like a comet, but a pixie could easily have all three.)
- Many Fairy species are extremely tiny, making it impossible for them to "pass" as humans. But they may try to fit into human society in other ways. (Modeling for Disney, for example. Or working part-time as a bug-zapper.)
- Eccentricity. While Demi-Humans tend to have goals that are similar to those of normal human beings - such as getting a job and accumulating wealth - Fairy Folk are much more likely to collect shiny buttons, or toe-nail clippings from silent movie stars.

Fairies (or Faeries)

***Fairy** - n. A mythical small being with human form, popularly believed to possess magical powers and to interfere in human affairs (with either good or evil intent); now, esp. such a being with the form of a delicate beautiful female, usu. with wings.*

NOTE: "Fairy" is a generic term which, unfortunately, officially designates several specific types of fairy folk which may not, in fact, be related at all. (i.e. The Tooth Fairy may not bear any resemblance to the Sugar Plum Fairy.)

"Fairy" is also frequently used to describe newly-discovered species which have not yet been properly classified - such as Golf Fairies, Sock Fairies (live in laundry

rooms), Elevator Fairies and Cab Fairies - which may be distinctly different types of creatures.

Sprites

Sprite - n. A goblins, a fairy, esp. a small freq. Mischievous pixie or elf.

Sprites are tiny sparkly fairies which resemble little balls of light. They do not look human at all, but if you look closely, they do seem to have some kind of shape, it's just hard to say what it is exactly.

Sprites are nocturnal and always originate in rural locales, where they are often seen hanging out with lightning bugs, but they are very curious about human beings and will sometimes wander into the city to try to figure them out.

Sprites usually avoid groups of people, but if they see someone sitting alone and very quiet they may approach them. So, interestingly, Sprites are most often spotted by people who were just wishing for a star to wish upon.

Sprites have a very poor understanding of human nature, but if they get even an inkling of what's bothering someone, they will try to do everything in their tiny power to help them out, usually with disastrous results.

Pixies

Pixie - n. In folklore, a supernatural being with magical powers; a fairy, an elf. Earliest in "pixie-path" - a path by which those who follow it become bewildered and lost.

Pixies are extremely short (fits in the palm of your hand) human-shaped beings with insect wings. (Tinkerbell is a classic pixie.) Pixies are not always female, but they are always feminine.

Every pixie has one or two additional magic abilities - (but they are different for every pixie) - which they generally use to help others.

Pixies have an alarming ability to ignore the realities of their own size and appearance. It is not unusual to see a Pixie telling off an 8 foot tall ogre, or standing in the middle of a crowded subway, screaming, "What am I, chopped liver?" when someone almost stepped on them. If a Pixie is having a bad day, they may march right into the local pub, plop down at the bar and demand some service as if there was nothing unusual about seeing a Pixie in Chelsea.

What Pixies really want, more than anything is respect. They feel that they make a valuable contribution to society and should be treated like everybody else even if they're not 6 feet tall.

This is an ongoing problem which is generally solved by Pixies avoiding humans altogether. However, occasionally a Pixie does get drawn into a situation and when they get the Pixie equivalent of road rage, they're very likely to make a scene.

Pixies are generally regarded as female, even when they're not, which has led to a recent trend of male pixies getting tattoos and piercings and wearing a lot of leather in an attempt to prove something. R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Sadly, male pixies often try to take up smoking in order to look cool, which is very difficult given that some of them are about the size of a cigarette.

Nixies

Nixie - n. A female water-elf; a water-nymph

Nixies are water-fairies. They are about the size of a fish. This is because Nixies can shape change into a fish at will. Shark Nixies can be quite tall, while Minnow Nixies are the size of pixies.

Nixies rarely leave the water, although they could breathe air if they had to. They are sometimes captured by fishermen.

Nixies are NOT exclusively female, but the women are more famous because capturing a fish that turns into a man who offers to do "anything, good sir, anything" if you would only let him go - just isn't the kind of limerick you want to be telling the other guys down at the wharf.

Imps

Imp - n. Young demon; mischievous child.

Imps are one-foot tall, hideously ugly and notoriously mischievous. They are roughly human-shaped, but they have been known to dress up as cats and squirrels and pigeons. There seems to be no reason for this, except that they hate to see a perfectly good dead cat go to waste. This disgusting habit has the unexpected benefit that people who see an imp scampering down an alley will often try to convince themselves that it was just a cat.

Imps have the ability to cast magic spells, but this ability appears to be completely random, so that even the imp doesn't know what's going to happen when it zaps you. Imps generally use all of their abilities to create mayhem, which tickles them pink.

Older imps may settle down and try to become respectable, productive members of society, but you don't hear about that very often because their rowdy adolescent phase

lasts about 500 years.

Brownies

Brownie - n. A small helpful elf or goblin in stories.

Brownies were once benevolent household fairies who took care of all your housework for you with no expectation of recompense. They were, however, extremely fastidious and doing the slightest thing wrong - like using the wrong salad fork at dinner or having red wine with fish - would send a Brownie into a tantrum and it would storm out of the house forever.

After a few hundred years of this, Brownies finally discovered therapy and came to realize that no one was going to live up to their anal retentive standards, and maybe it would be better if they quit the housekeeping business. Or at least stop doing it for free.

Brownies are still as big a bunch of clean freaks as ever, but now they try to find more productive ways to channel their energies. A lot of them run highly-effective businesses. Martha Stewart is the "front man" for a Brownie who actually comes up with all those ideas. (You didn't think a human being spent that much time finding creative uses for old newspapers?)

The international Brownies™ scouting group was originally founded by an actual Brownie (who retired in a huff when one of the troop leaders used the wrong salad fork at dinner.)

Sometimes they miss the old days, though, and have been known to spontaneously break into a house or two and just clean the kitchen.

Nymphs & Sylphs

Nymph - n. Class. Mythol. Any of a class of semi-divine spirits regarded as maidens inhabiting the sea, rivers, hills, woods, and trees.

Sylph - n. Any of a class of imaginary beings supposed to inhabit the air; A slender, graceful woman or girl.

Nymphs and Sylphs are types of fairies which are specific to the waters or the air, respectively. Nymphs are also found in parks and woodland areas. Sylphs are rarely found in large metropolitan areas, even to visit.

III. Goblins and Hobgoblins

Goblins and Hobgoblins are a type of Demi-Human, but are listed here as a special class unto themselves because of the peculiar problems they present for Dragons (and for everybody else, for that matter.)

Goblin - n. *A mischievous, ugly demon.*

Hobgoblin - n. *A mischievous imp or sprite, spec. Robin Goodfellow; something to be feared superstitiously, a bogey, a bugbear; an elf, goblin.*

Goblins and Hobgoblins are virtually identical. In fact, very few outsiders can tell them apart. They can, however, and they HATE one another. If you see an argument between two goblins who are about to come to blows over an off-handed remark, or a gesture, or a box score, chances are the real problem is that one of them is a hobgoblin.

Racial tension between Goblins and Hobgoblins (or "Hoblins" as they prefer to be called) goes back many centuries and no one has any idea where it started or why, least of all the Hobs and Gobs.

The only thing anyone can guess is that "hob" meaning rustic may indicate that Hobgoblins were originally rural and there was some sort of conflict over Hobgoblins moving to the city and taking Goblin jobs. Or vice versa.

Whatever the origins of the conflict, it's all patently ridiculous because no one can tell them apart, and neither should they. Their hatred for their fellow goblinoids aside, both species have all of the following in common:

Goblins are an ugly race, by human standards, but they are more nearly human-size than most Demi-Humans (anywhere from 1.5 to 5 feet in height) so, with the right hat, they can sometimes pass for ugly humans.

Goblins have a lot of other hobbies and interests in common with humankind (greed, lust, anger, sloth) so they can be found in all walks of life, but they are generally the more disagreeable sort.

Goblins lack humanity's natural aversion to filth, however, so they have no problem working in some of the seamier parts of town. Goblins are frequently janitors, sanitation workers, fish marketers, meat packers, and of course, subway and sewer workers.

In fact, Goblins have built a mammoth underground city in the sewers of Manhattan. **Goblinopolis** is truly spectacular - in a smelly, sticky kind of way. However, unlike Dwarves (who sort of have to work underground, because of their sensitive eyes), Goblins have no problem living and working above ground as well. It's just that Goblinopolis was such a great location, and no one was using it.

Bugbear / Bugaboo

Bugbear - n. *A sort of hobgoblin (perhaps in the shape of a bear) supposed to devour naughty children; gen. Any imaginary being invoked to frighten children.*

Bugaboo - n. *A bogey; a bugbear*

Bugbears are a breed of Hobgoblin. Fortunately, they are not involved in the whole Hob/Gob racial tension thing, and they are very easy to tell apart because a Bugbear's entire body is covered with thick scraggly hair.

Bugbears generally try much harder to be friendly than the other Goblin races, but because they are definitively "scary-looking", they find it extremely difficult to keep up a good attitude. (You'd be irascible, too, if enough children screamed at you and ran away.) So most of the Bugbears you'll meet in populated areas tend to be intolerable monsters with a teddy bear hidden somewhere deep inside.

Bugbears spend an excessive amount of time grooming, shaving, waxing, and trying out desperate mail-order makeover products in hopes of finally making a good appearance.

Kobold

Kobold - n. *German folklore. A familiar spirit, supposed to haunt houses and help the occupants; a brownie. Also an underground spirit; a goblin, a gnome.*

Kobolds are the German branch of Goblinidae. You can easily recognize them by their thick accents and their liederhosen. Fortunately, Kobold's do not share any of their American cousins' racial prejudices. In fact, Kobolds are very communal and do almost everything as a team. (Or a flock, rather, because they behave just like sheep. There is never a leader, but if one Kobold starts something, all the others will automatically join in. Usually singing festive Kobold songs in Deutsch while they're at it.)

Kobolds in New York tend to act like tourists, even if they've lived here for a number of years. Oddly, speaking with a German accent makes it much easier for Kobolds to disguise themselves as humans because most people don't question them looking funny since they're from another country.

Their quasi-socialist upbringing sometimes causes trouble for Kobolds in the U.S. because they really can't fathom our concept of property. If Kobolds see a house they really like, for example, they'll just go live there.

IV. Other Mythical Creatures

Scarcer magical creatures may not have the same complicated socio-political relationships with human beings and with each other, but they may still require a

Dragon's protection from time to time, in the same way that ordinary endangered species rely on human preservation efforts.

Unicorns

Unicorn - n. A mythical animal with the body of a horse and a single straight horn projecting from its forehead.

Unicorns look like horses with long horns in the middle of their forehead. They are always strikingly beautiful, and they know it. Unicorns are seldom seen by humans because they are very distrustful of them and are magically quick and elusive.

A Unicorn is a sucker for a young girl, though, and they are known to come out of hiding to let one pet them. But NOBODY rides a Unicorn.

Unicorn horns are highly prized by Alchemists.

Gargoyles

Gargoyle - n. A grotesque carving usu. In the form of a human or animal mouth, head, or body, projecting from the gutter of a building, esp. in Gothic architecture, and usu. Acting as a spout to drain off rainwater.

Gargoyles are stony, winged creatures which descended from not-so-flightless creatures many generations ago. Gargoyles still long for the days when they took to the skies in great flocks, and you can still see many of them perched on the rooftops of buildings pining for their life among the clouds, or maybe even trying to work up the courage to make the leap.

Bogey (aka Bogeyman)

Bogey - n. An evil spirit, a goblin; a bogle.

The Bogeyman is not really evil, nor is he a goblin. But he really does love to scare the bejeezus out of people. It's funny when they scream.

A bogey is an extremely thin, spidery-limbed, shadow-like, man-shaped being who spends almost all of his time jumping out of people from doorways or alleys or under their beds.

When he's not scaring people, a bogey is in your refrigerator eating your leftovers and giggling to himself.

Vampires

***Vampire** - n. A ghost, monster, or reanimated corpse supposed to leave its grave at night to suck the blood of sleeping people, often represented as a human figure with long pointed canine teeth.*

Vampires realized quite some time ago that they were getting a very bad reputation and they had to do something about it. So over the past 60 years or so, nearly all Vampires became vegetarians. And they've taken great pains to assist in bringing to justice those who were still sucking blood.

Today, Vampires you meet on the street are all peaceful, but hungry-looking folks who work as librarians, desk clerks, DJs, subway tellers and, occasionally, as blood bankers.

Some of them can be found doing "awareness" workshops whenever a new horror film is released, in order to combat vampire stereotypes.

Werewolves (Animal-Spirits)

***Werewolf** - n. A mythical being able to change at times from a person to a wolf.*

There are no such things as werewolves. There are, however, North American **wolf-spirits** - wolves who can take the shape of humans. There are also **deer-spirits** and **bear-spirits** but they tend to be more reclusive. Wolf-spirits, on the other hand, are pretty nosy and very curious about humans and have been known to go into cities to investigate. The werewolf myths are based on such sightings.

Animal-spirits in human guise are impossible to distinguishable from human beings except by their animal-like behaviors and an unusually fearful or distrustful attitude toward people.

Though they are still rarely seen in big cities, animal-spirits circulate freely in Native American communities, and can even be found working in Indian casinos. (Bear-spirits make great pit bosses.)

Pegasi (aka Pegasus)

***Pegasus** - n. In Gr. mythology, a winged horse, symbol of poetic inspiration.*

These winged horses, once prized as steeds, are becoming increasingly rare as skiers and other extreme sportsmen continue to encroach upon their nesting grounds. There are fewer than 20 nesting pairs left in the world. An exciting new preservation initiative proposes to help the endangered pegasus by building artificial aeries in urban areas on the roofs of skyscrapers.

Mermaids

***Mermaid** - n. An imaginary partly human sea creature with the head and trunk of a woman and the tail of a fish or cetacean (in early use often identified with the siren of classical mythology)*

Mythical accounts of Mermaids are surprisingly accurate. They have been known to come on land (They are very curious about "earth men"), but their tails do not turn into legs when they dry off. (There are, however, some fairly simple alchemical potions which do the trick.)

Mermaid culture centers around the sunken city of Atlantis which is still a thriving community today with all the modern conveniences. The Internet poses a special risk for Atlantean society in the very near future because more and more merkids are going online and befriending earth kids in chat rooms. And what happens when all of these children decide they want to meet?

Genie (or Djinn)

***Genie** - n. A spirit or jinnee (in Arabian stories), esp. one trapped in or inhabiting a bottle, lamp, etc., and capable of granting wishes.*

Traditional descriptions of Genies are also fairly accurate. They don't, however, have the enormous unearthly magical power to grant any wish at the snap of a finger. If you wish for a ton of gold, for example, they have to actually zip down to Fort Knox, load up a truck and haul it back to you. They can do it. It just might take time.

[1] All "definitions" are taken from Webster's New World Dictionary, circa 1960.

[2] Dwarves also have a fear of flying.

[3] You may have heard about the fad for "dwarf tossing" on Howard Stern. This is something actual dwarves would probably do.

[4] When Trolls reach adolescence they will generally just pick a sex and then start talking in a really deep voice or a really high squeaky voice and referring to themselves as "her" or "him". But there's no biological basis for it. Hypothetically, a Troll could change back at any time, but they're generally too stubborn to admit they might have made a mistake and prefer to just stick with what they are and start complaining about how awful "men" or "women" are, all the time.

[5] Possibly Andy Warhol.

[6] Gheorghe Muresan, Luc Longley, Vlade Divac - giants. Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant - not giants. Shaq - possibly something altogether different.